

LOS ANGELES - Representative Xavier Becerra (CA - 30) was honored by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) at a luncheon sponsored by California State University, Los Angeles on Monday, May 13. He was acknowledged for his leadership in gaining federal recognition and funding for Hispanic serving institutions (HSI's) and presented with HACU's "Exemplary Policy Leadership" award for 2001.

Throughout his tenure in Congress, Rep. Becerra has worked to increase the notoriety and financial status of HSI's. He has also encouraged public-private partnerships between corporations and organizations aimed at fostering educational development. These efforts came to fruition at the May 13 luncheon as Merrill Lynch presented HACU with a \$25,000 check for the organization's college scholarship program. Merrill Lynch was also honored at the event.

Rep. Becerra was quick to turn the focus of his acceptance speech to the importance of public-private partnerships. "We're really here to celebrate this partnership forged between HACU and Merrill Lynch," Rep. Becerra said. "It is significant for companies like Merrill Lynch to recognize the value of investing in worthy organizations like HACU. Merrill Lynch is to be commended for promoting opportunities for Latinos in the financial services industry. Their substantial gift today highlights the company's continued commitment to education."

"Congressman Xavier Becerra has been a tireless supporter of Hispanic-serving institutions in the U.S. Congress," said Dr. Antonio Flores, President and CEO of HACU. "From the initial recognition of the importance of these institutions in the Higher Education Act to the on-going effort to secure adequate funding, Congressman Becerra has been a good friend to HACU and to the schools and students we serve."

Founded in 1986, HACU currently represents over 315 colleges and universities committed to Latino higher education. Though HACU's 315 members represent only seven percent of the nation's colleges and universities, 65 percent of all

Latino students in higher education are enrolled in HACU-member schools.